

# FireFighter

The magazine of the Fire Brigades Union ♦♦♦ [www.fbu.org.uk](http://www.fbu.org.uk)

August/September 2014

## Spot the difference

**N Ireland pension scheme proposal exposes Westminster government's failure to negotiate**

See p10







# Matt Wrack

## We need to stand strong – and we are

FBU members joined more than two million striking public sector workers on 10 July as unions came together in coordinated industrial action to send a clear message to the government that we have had enough of its austerity.

Like all other public sector workers, we are under attack from a government that is wrecking our public services and destroying the lives and futures of millions.

The current proposals from government take no account of the work firefighters actually do.

They take no account of the fitness standards required or the fact that fitness tends to decline as people get older. The idea that people will have the same levels of fitness at 58 or 59 that they had in their

20s is ridiculous. Everyone understands this – except government ministers.

There are no “desk jobs” to redeploy firefighters to. This means that firefighters are likely to face the choice of seeing their pension reduced by half or being dismissed from the service.

### Most expensive scheme

The government denies these risks, but fire service employers are very clear that they need to retain the right to sack firefighters who suffer an age-related decline in fitness.

At the same time they have pushed up the costs of what was already one of the most expensive pension schemes for workers anywhere in the public or private sector.

Most firefighters are now paying over £4,000 a year from a salary of less than £29,000.

The Fire Brigades Union has presented a huge amount of evidence on this over the past three years. The government is simply ignoring it. That is why we have been forced to take industrial action.

On every picket line I have visited, firefighters have been overwhelmed by public support.

### Not just for ourselves

We are not just looking out for ourselves but are fighting to save public services that so many of us rely upon.

Yes – strikes are inconvenient for the public and trade union members alike. The alternative to strikes would be to let the government off the hook. It would be to let them get away with robbery and allow them to ignore the hard evidence we have presented.

Strike action is necessary

to protect our members and also to help deliver a genuinely professional fire and rescue service. That cannot be done on the back of endless cuts.

It is now more important than ever that we stick together in our fight against the government.

We recently embarked on sets of shorter, but more frequent strikes as part of our pension dispute.

It is a testament to the failure of government to engage with us effectively, and make us an alternative, sustainable, affordable pension offer, that we have had to take this course of action.

In unity we stand strong; this was why unions came into being in the first place.

When I think of solidarity between firefighters, I think of Ashley Brown.

Ashley is the Cheshunt firefighter who was sacked for talking about strike action on social media.

His firing has left him and his family devastated, as after serving his community for over 25 years, he has been left with nothing.

### Phenomenal response

The union is fighting against his dismissal and the response from members has been phenomenal.

There have been demonstrations and thousands of messages of support from Twitter.

At a time when firefighters and the fire service are under attack we need to stand strong.



FBU members demonstrating in Preston on 10 July

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Now what do I know about housing and planning? Westminster fire minister Brandon Lewis has been promoted to minister of state in charge of housing and planning – the fourth housing minister in three years. He will be on an even bigger pension ...



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### LETTER

#### Do you know firefighter Steve, who helped to save a life on the Underground?

Around 4pm on 27 May this year, my 27-year-old son, Ewan, suffered a cardiac arrest on an Underground train which then pulled in to Hammersmith Broadway station in London. He was far from home (Glasgow), alone and in London for a job interview.

An off-duty outreach nurse from the Marsden saw the guard running up the platform and got off the train and followed him. She got help from an off-duty firefighter, Steve. Between them they kept Ewan's vital functions going, and administered shocks from a defibrillator until the paramedics arrived.

My son's heart was restarted after 20 to 30 minutes and he was taken to intensive care in Hammersmith hospital where it was found that he had suffered no brain or heart damage as a result of the cardiac arrest.

He's hacked off because he can't get back to playing football. But is doing well nevertheless and watched every game in the World Cup (nearly) and looks forward to having a full working life inasmuch as any young person in the UK can look forward to these days.

Only 17% of people who have a cardiac arrest outside hospital survive and the number who experience no damage is even fewer.

I suspect it was Lara (who we've made contact with) and Steve (who we haven't) who pretty much saved his life. I'd like to find him and thank him and let him know the outcome of his intervention.

Can you help me please?

Neil Rothnie

neil.rothnie@gmail.com



## Colleagues stand with sacked firefighter Ashley Brown

Firefighters rallied to call for Hertfordshire County Council to reinstate firefighter Ashley Brown after his dismissal for discussing strike action on social media.

A question was put to the council meeting in Hertford, asking for a panel of councillors to review his dismissal.

Keith Handscomb, East of England FBU executive council member, said: "A dedicated firefighter and father of three has been sacked for the first 'blip' in an otherwise exemplary 25-year career, leaving him and his family in a desperate situation.

"It seems that political tensions around the national firefighter strike clouded what should really have been a simple individual case.

"There is real outrage among firefighters over how he has been treated. The council must reinstate him so that he can do what he does best — serve the people of Hertfordshire as a professional and experienced firefighter."

A father of three whose father (who recently sadly passed away) and uncle were firefighters, Brown now faces an uncertain future.

Charles Walker, Conservative MP



HERTFORDSHIRE MERCURY



**Top:** Keith Handscomb and FBU general secretary Matt Wrack address the rally  
**Above:** with Ashley Brown's wife Nicola and son Elliot

**Below:** FBU members outside Hertfordshire County Council headquarters in Hertford

for Broxbourne, has said he supports Brown's reinstatement.

He was quoted as saying: "I hope that his case will be reviewed and that some compassion will be exercised by those in authority. He fully admits to having made a mistake, which he has apologised for. I hope common sense prevails and he is given the opportunity to return to the job he loves."

In a letter to the council, Ashley's wife Nicola Brown said: "My husband has been a firefighter for over 25 years. I have only ever heard positive and complimentary words from his colleagues.

"Sometimes, if I allowed myself to think of what he could potentially face while on duty it was too much to bear, knowing that he might not come home.

"Ash has given the best years of his life to the fire service and to helping other people. Now Ash needs a helping hand.

"Please do whatever you can to help Ash get a second chance."

A petition calling for the Cheshunt firefighter to be reinstated has already gained more than 7,000 signatures.

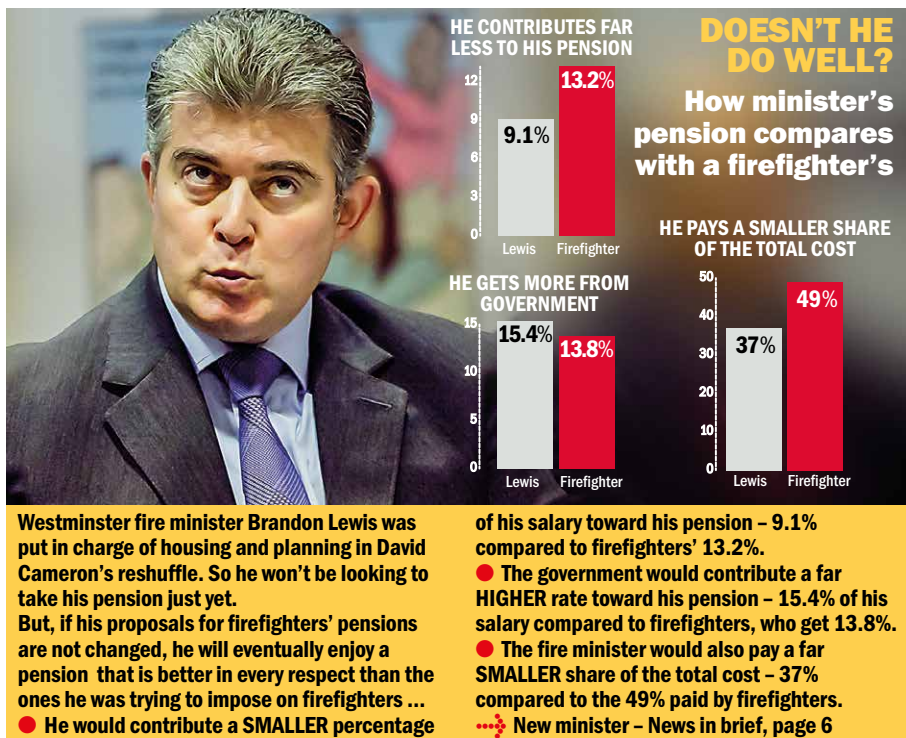
... <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-cheshunts-ashley-brown>





David Pitt at a  
10 July strike rally  
in Birmingham:  
Young people must  
organise

TIM SONNENSCHN/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



## Merger threatens 17 jobs and would halve control calls

### Shropshire

Plans under consideration by Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service could result in the closure of a fire control room in Shrewsbury as the fire authority looks to merge control services with Hereford and Worcester.

The move, which could result in up to 17 redundancies, would mean emergency calls from the Shrewsbury area being handled in Hereford and Worcester.

Shropshire FBU secretary Matt Lamb said: "Axing the control room in Shrewsbury will halve the number of calls that can be answered, which is particularly worrying during high demand incidents such as wildfire or flooding.

"When you reduce the number of control rooms, you risk losing vital local knowledge that could end up costing lives.

"Staff are already overworked and a decision to close the Shrewsbury control room will only add to that. I have severe reservations about this plan."

◆◆◆ The consultation can be found at <http://bit.ly/1sYA0Cs>

## FBU hails 'fantastic result' on lockouts

### Buckinghamshire

Firefighters in Buckinghamshire will no longer be "locked out" for whole shifts during strike action after the FBU negotiated an end to the local fire service's policy.

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service had announced that firefighters taking part in action over attacks on their pensions would lose pay for entire shifts, rather than for the two or four hours of the strikes.

Buckinghamshire was the only service to take this approach. Local firefighters said that the move "posed serious questions about public safety".

Ricky Matthews, FBU southern region executive member, said: "This is a victory for all firefighters in Buckinghamshire and – most importantly – the communities we protect.

"The climbdown by the fire and rescue service came as a result of FBU members in Buckinghamshire sticking together. A special thank you must go to our retained members for staying strong. Without their support it would not have been possible to achieve this fantastic result."

## SOUNDING OFF

### Austerity and young people

David Pitt says young people need to organise against unemployment and a failing education system

Recent figures show that government austerity is hitting young people hard.

One person in five aged between 16 and 24 is unemployed. This is unacceptable considering the United Kingdom is the sixth richest country in the world.

Worried parents and school leavers ask what the government is doing to rectify this.

Politicians are quick to boast about internships and apprenticeships that will alleviate unemployment, but all efforts have fallen short of reversing this tragedy. Almost one million young people were out of work last year.

Education is also being slashed by the coalition. The education maintenance allowance has been scrapped. It was designed to provide financial support to young people from lower-income families in full-time education.

Now students have to rely on a part-time job or parents for money to travel to and from college. It does not stop there.

University fees have doubled and, in some cases, trebled, making it financially impossible for students from low-income households to reach their academic potential.

These cuts are ideological. What chance have working class young people got in this recession against a government that is hell bent on making them bear the brunt of austerity?

Young people must organise and regroup to send a clear message to government that further cuts in education and jobs will not be tolerated.

The government must invest in young people to ensure a brighter future for tomorrow.

◆ David Pitt is an FBU official in the West Midlands and a delegate to the 2014 TUC Young Workers Forum.



# Harry Hyman, executive member for 16 years

## Obituary

Harry Hyman, who was FBU EC member for the East Midlands from 1960 to 1976 has died, writes Don Nelson, East Midlands EC member from 1988 to 1992.

Harry, who was a member of the FBU from 1946 to 1976, was born in 1924 and lived in various parts of Nottinghamshire throughout his life.

He volunteered to join the Royal Navy in 1941 and served on hospital ships in many parts of Europe during the war.

He left the navy in 1946 and joined the then National Fire Service followed by Nottingham City fire brigade when fire service responsibilities reverted to local authorities.

Harry was elected on to the union's national executive council in 1960. He helped to achieve many improvements to working conditions, some of which are enjoyed to the present day.

He retired in June 1976 after 30 years' service. Not one to sit back and retire, he joined the Automobile Association where he worked until his 65th birthday.

Before retiring from the fire service Harry and his family had moved their home to the village of Keyworth in South Nottinghamshire and it was here that he became fully involved in village life.

Once his working life was over he helped in establishing the Keyworth Twinning Association and the setting up of the village branch of the Royal Navy



Association. He was also a long-serving member of the Keyworth Royal British Legion and the local parish council.

During this period Harry and his wife Doreen organised many charitable events. This work was recognised when they were invited to a royal garden party at Buckingham Palace.

In the last few years of his life Harry's health deteriorated and he was cared for at the Hillside Farm Care Home near Keyworth.

## IN BRIEF

### FBU meets new minister

Portsmouth North MP Penny Mordaunt has been appointed as the Westminster government fire minister following a Cabinet reshuffle.

She held her first meeting with union officials during the eight-day strikes.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "We would like to congratulate Penny on her appointment and hope we can work constructively with her to resolve ongoing disputes."

"We are in the middle of a long-running dispute over proposed pension changes that would see firefighters lose the pensions they were promised and which they have paid for."

"The government proposals take no account of the real work firefighters do, nor of the real demands and needs of the fire service."

"In particular, we hope that a change of personnel will lead to the government finally seeing sense on their pension proposals."

Ms Mordaunt replaced Brandon Lewis, who held the post from September 2012. She is the tenth fire minister in ten years.

### Support from rescued boy

Gateshead firefighters taking strike action in June over pension changes had a visit from a young man they had rescued in 2006.

Nathaniel Smith was only five when he was saved by firefighters from the station as fire ripped through his home on the Springwell estate.

He visited the station with his family to show his support for the FBU campaign.

### Firefighter pride

Members of the Fire Brigades Union took part in the London Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride parade this year. Lucy Masoud, FBU LGBT regional representative said: "The fire service is still seen by some as slightly behind the times when it comes to LGBT issues but, thanks to the FBU and its members, we are now at the forefront."

"We are constantly pushing London Fire Brigade to make progress with LGBT issues."



## City where Cameron said 'no frontline cuts' has half firefighters it had in 2004

### Cumbria

The city of Carlisle and its population of more than 70,000 recently had only six firefighters and two crew managers on duty – half the number that would have been on call ten years ago.

The FBU said that such a small team – the result of government cuts – could not effectively staff two fire engines and the aerial ladder platform (ALP) based at Carlisle East fire station.

Staff shortages would mean slower response

times and a greater risk to life and property, said FBU brigade secretary Graeme Higgins. "Both the general



public and firefighters themselves will be at risk.

"It's time local politicians united with firefighters and the public to stand up to central government and demand they put safety

ahead of their ruthless austerity agenda."

Without a dedicated team to staff the ALP, firefighters must now return to the station from an incident to pick up the vehicle when needed.

Carlisle's ALP serves a large area of north Cumbria. The next nearest is in Barrow-in-Furness, 90 miles from Carlisle.

Prime minister David Cameron visited Carlisle firefighters on the eve of the 2010 general election (left). He told them there would be no cuts to frontline services.



"They are destroying our public services and wrecking the lives of millions"



FBU members joined other trade unionists in Trafalgar Square, London

## Ready to strike – and to talk

### Pensions dispute

The continuing firefighters' pensions dispute with the government saw FBU members take part in a day of mass strike action with other union members as well as undertaking eight consecutive days of strike action.

### 10 July strikes

Firefighters in England and Wales joined over two million other public sector workers, including teachers, civil servants and local government workers, in a coordinated strike on 10 July.

It was the fifteenth time FBU members have walked out as part of the pensions dispute.

The day of mass strike action, which took place between 10am and 7pm, saw demonstrations all over the country. FBU general secretary Matt Wrack addressed thousands of people in Trafalgar Square in London alongside other trade union speakers including PCS union general secretary Mark Serwotka.

Wrack said: "The fact that this government has united so many workers to take strike action against them is a testament to the failure of their policies.

"They are destroying our public services and wrecking the lives of millions."

The FBU's involvement in the strike was

announced in the same week that two fire and rescue authorities announced service cutbacks.

### Eight days

Ahead of eight consecutive days of strike action, Matt Wrack wrote to then Westminster fire minister Brandon Lewis calling for urgent talks about proposed changes to firefighters' pensions.

Lewis wrote back and reinstated an offer from June last year that the union had turned down previously and continues to reject.

In another letter, Lewis also suggested that he would only meet union officials with the precondition that the strikes would be called off. Wrack said: "We expect to meet ministers without preconditions. The FBU has not set preconditions on the

Department of Communities and Local Government before meetings.

"We have not, for example, refused to meet once the minister imposed a further contributions increase."

The FBU says that it offered to meet with ministers over the weekend before the strikes to resolve the dispute; however there was no response from DCLG and no comment from Lewis.

The eight days of strike action consisted of two-hour stops twice a day, bar Sunday 20 July which had just one stop.

Wrack said: "The number of strike periods illustrates the strength of feeling amongst firefighters whilst limiting disruption to the fire service, the public and our members' working lives."

### Continuing action

The union will continue with industrial action after 21 July with action short of a strike with no planned end date.

Wrack said: "The government must realise that firefighters cannot accept proposals that would have such devastating consequences for their futures, their families' futures – and the future of the fire and rescue service itself.

"We have tried every route available to us to make the government see sense over their attacks."

**"The government must realise that firefighters cannot accept proposals that would have such devastating consequences for their futures, their families' futures – and the future of the fire and rescue service itself"**



# 'We had to live without water, gas

Sydney Smith – who was the last surviving firefighter to have attended the fire at Coventry cathedral caused by the Coventry Blitz – has passed away aged 99.

On 14 November 1940 the city was the victim of one of the most devastating bombing raids of World War 2 and the

ruins of its 14th century cathedral are one of the defining images of this destructive period.

Sydney was called out to protect the city as a member of the Auxiliary Fire Service, of which he had been a member of since 1938.

During the war he would spend his evenings firefighting, while holding down a day job at the Armstrong Whitworth factory building bombers.

Recalling the night of the Coventry Blitz, Sydney wrote in his autobiography: "On the big raid of November 14, we were sent





# or electricity for about six weeks'

to a number of house fires.

"We managed to put some out, but it was a losing battle when the mains ran dry, so we used buckets and stirrup pumps to salvage what we could. It was so cold that night, I found that I was frozen to the pavement on one occasion.

"This was the night that the Cathedral caught fire. We had gone on duty at 7pm and were still damping down at 8am the following morning – we never even heard the 'All Clear' at all. After that raid we had to live without water, gas or electricity for about six weeks."

Sydney was later given the Freedom of the City of Coventry in gratitude for his work that night.

He is survived by wife Phyllis, children Graham, Bill and Beryl, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

**VIEW**  
FROM THE  
AERIAL LADDER  
PLATFORM



*November 1940: Firefighters attend pumps in Coventry as daybreak reveals the devastation wreaked by Luftwaffe bombers during the nightly raids on the city*

GEORGE W. HALES/FOX PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES



# Spot the

After months of negotiations with the FBU, the Stormont government in N Ireland has offered firefighters a pension scheme with a normal pension age of 55. *Firefighter* assesses the details of the new offer and looks at what it means for the overall campaign

**W**hile the Westminster government continues to push ahead with its unworkable 2015 firefighters' pension scheme, the N Ireland government has made an offer that deals with some of the union's concerns, including a normal pension age (NPA) of 55.

It took a significantly different approach to the pensions dispute, agreeing amendments to its Public Service Pensions Act that would allow more flexibility around the scheme's normal pensions age.

After months of negotiations, in which the FBU presented an evidence-based assessment, the N Ireland government agreed with the union's view that a normal pension age of 60 is not workable and does not reflect the demands of the occupation – particularly around issues of fitness and age-related decline in fitness.

Although the N Ireland deal is far from perfect, it resolves some of the concerns the union has raised and is the best proposal made by any government in the UK to date.

Because it would keep the NPA at 55, firefighters who retired at this age would

**“The proposals are by no means perfect but, nevertheless, demonstrate that, when both sides are committed to resolving conflict through dialogue, industrial action can be avoided”**





# difference



not suffer any actuarial reductions – the amount by which a pension is reduced if taken before the normal pension age. This is entirely different to the proposal for England and Wales which would see reductions of almost 50%. The figure for Scotland is 21.8%.

The N Ireland offer would also resolve the potential problems that would face firefighters whose fitness had declined as a result of age. In England and Wales, they could be left with neither a job nor a pension if they failed a fitness test after the age of 55.

But in order to accommodate a retirement age of 55, firefighters in N Ireland would be expected to pay 12.2% of their salary into the scheme in 2015; rising to 13.2% after that. And the proposals also include a reduced “accrual rate”, meaning firefighters’ pensions would grow more slowly.

The union is getting ready to consult members on the offer through a series of open meetings and a consultative ballot. Further details will follow.

The N Ireland government’s ability to offer a scheme with an NPA of 55 that is within the cost ceiling imposed by the Treasury is in stark contrast to the approach of former Westminster fire minister Brandon Lewis who has said that such a scheme would be unaffordable.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: “The offer by the N Ireland government clearly demonstrates that allowing firefighters to retire at 55 is both sensible and affordable for government.

“The proposals are by no means perfect but, nevertheless, demonstrate that, when both sides are committed to resolving conflict through dialogue, industrial action can be avoided.

“It’s time for the governments in the rest of the UK to take note of the progress we have made in N Ireland and agree a more affordable, workable and fair pension scheme than is currently on offer.”



# MARLIE FARM

# FBU will campaign for justice



**Geoff Wicker and Brian Wembridge lost their lives in 2006 tackling a fire in East Sussex. Despite a High Court ruling that compensation must be paid to their families the county fire and rescue service is refusing to pay. As the FBU launches a campaign for justice, *Firefighter* looks back at the tragedy**



## THE INCIDENT

Retained firefighter Geoff Wicker and fire service photographer Brian Wembridge were among the first at the scene of the fire at Marlie Farm in Shortgate, East Sussex, on 3 December 2006.

The site, owned and operated by Festival Fireworks Ltd, exploded when a fire broke out and came into contact with a metal container packed with unlicensed fireworks. The explosion killed the two firefighters and injured at least 20 others.

A report into the incident found several contributing factors to the tragedy. They included a lack of training for firefighters, a lack of information about Marlie Farm and a failure of the authorities to inspect the site regularly.

It was also found that on the day of the fire there was a lack of equipment, radios were not working properly



*Geoff Wicker (left) and Brian Wembridge*

and when firefighters should have been evacuating from the site, only 16% of crews at the scene received the command.

## THE COURT CASE

When the case was brought to the civil courts, Mr Justice Irwin ruled in favour of the victims' families, saying that crews were "ill prepared and poorly resourced" by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.

The High Court also rejected the ESFRS claim that it had no responsibility towards its firefighters and owed them no duty of care, therefore having no liability when a firefighter is injured or killed on the fireground.

ESFRS should have offered compensation to the firefighters families then, but, instead, chose to appeal against the decision.





In January 2014 the Court of Appeal granted the fire authority leave to appeal. After further delay, the appeal has been listed to be heard in February 2015.

## THE CAMPAIGN

Eight years after the tragic events at Marlie Farm the families of Geoff Wicker and Brian Wembridge have still not received any compensation.

We need justice for everyone affected by the disaster at Marlie Farm. We need the ESFRS to act with integrity and we need your help to achieve this.

Help secure justice for Geoff, Brian and their families by signing the FBU petition demanding ESFRS compensate the families immediately as the High Court has ruled.

We need you, your colleagues, friends, family and anyone else you know to sign

*The scene at Festival Fireworks after the explosion*

**“The way East Sussex has behaved is shameful, but they still do not seem to get the message. I implore all members to get behind the campaign in order to get justice for Geoff and Brian”**

the petition. So spread the word to get as many people as possible to sign up.

The more people who sign, the better chance of success we have.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: “Geoff and Brian dedicated their lives to the fire service and their families deserve much better.

“The way East Sussex has behaved is shameful, but they still do not seem to get the message.

“I implore all members to get behind the campaign in order to get justice for Geoff and Brian.”

**You can add your name to the petition through the FBU’s dedicated Marlie Farm website at [www.justiceforfirefighters.co.uk](http://www.justiceforfirefighters.co.uk) Hashtag: #Justice4Firefighters Petitioning @EastSussexFRS**





# Talk and telephone yo

Richard Gurner, editor of the *Caerphilly Observer*, explains how FBU members

**E**ver spoken to a local journalist? They're not a bad bunch and they are vital to getting your news out into the local community.

Here is a quick guide to getting more coverage in the local press.

## 1. Who covers your area?

It may seem an obvious question, but it's one worth asking. Local media is usually comprised of the local weekly (or fortnightly) newspaper covering a town or group of towns, a regional daily newspaper covering a much wider patch, such as a county,

and of course the BBC and ITV television regions.

There are also local radio stations run by the BBC and commercial companies, as well as a host of smaller publications run by independent organisations and individuals. These could include blogs and websites.

*Make a list so you know which media cover your patch, and then ...*

## 2. Get to know your patch reporter

The next step is to get to know the dedicated reporter for each outlet.

Email is often cited as the best means to get hold

of a journalist these days, but journalists' inboxes are quite often bulging with news releases and sometimes things can slip through the gap – especially if the news item you have doesn't quite catch a hack's attention.

Give them a call to say hello and introduce yourself. Try to set up an informal meeting so they have a firm point of reference in the future if they need to contact you for local union reaction to an issue.

## 3. What's the story?

You know which journalists to target and you have made initial contact. But what do they want from you?

The day-to-day business of covering fire and rescue incidents is usually taken care of by either a brigade's press team or picked up by journalists doing the daily calls to control rooms or stations.

But what about the rest? There is probably a lot going on with local fire services that does not get reported.

Does the local FBU branch have a say on a planned station closure?

Is there a local FBU officer available that can talk to local media about the pension changes? Is your watch involved in charity fund-raising? Is your station having a family open day? Has a



# Our way into the media

can maximise their chances getting coverage in their local media

firefighter done something extraordinary above and beyond the call of duty?

#### 4. Press release

A press release should be to-the-point, include at least one quote from a named individual and a contact telephone number. It should be emailed in the first instance and written into the body of an email.

If you don't see the story appear, give the journalist a call to find out if they plan to use it.

Journalists very rarely reply to press release emails unless they need more information or clarification on something.

In times of tight deadlines, this is where a contact telephone number comes in handy.

#### 5. Getting your story picked up

If you want your fancy dress charity fundraiser mentioned in the local or regional

papers, make sure there is a photograph of a firefighter in fancy dress.

Likewise, if your station is holding an open day and would like a TV crew to show up, make sure they have something interesting to film, such as youngsters trying out some equipment or getting

dressed in uniform.

If you have arranged something at a specific time, then include that in your release so that camera crews and photographers have a clear slot for their diary.

The more contact you have with your local reporters the more likely it is that they will use your story.

Media relations are often on a basis of information exchange. If a publication or outlet feels that you are friendly when it comes to comment requests or finding out about a particular incident, then they are more likely to feature your other stories.

**The more contact you have with your local reporters the more likely it is that they will use your story**



# Standing strong

On 10 July more than two million firefighters, teachers, civil servants and local government workers took part in coordinated strike action across the UK.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: "I would like to congratulate all firefighters who took part in the

strikes and who stood strong with their brothers and sisters throughout the union movement.

"This government's austerity agenda is an attack on all firefighters, on all teachers, on all civil servants and on all local government workers."







HAZEL DUNLOP





# FURNITURE FIRES

## Cuts must stop to enable proper testing

*Trading standards departments are being cut back and are unable to carry out the appropriate tests*

Fire deaths in the home steadily increased to over 600 per year through the 1970s and 80s. One of the main causes was how easily the upholstered furniture of the time ignited and the quantity of toxic smoke that was rapidly generated by combustible foam fillings.

The introduction of the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) regulations in 1988 saw the number of fire-related deaths in the home fall to record low levels.

While other factors have also influenced this fall, the furniture regulations are widely recognised as being responsible for saving hundreds of lives every year.

### Fundamental change

The FBU is, therefore, very interested in the proposal to change fundamentally the fire testing regime that underpins the regulations; particularly since it is claimed that the proposed change will enable a reduction in the amount of fire retardant chemicals used in furniture manufacture.

The proposed changes involve moving from a relatively simple set of tests to a more complicated system of composite testing, exemptions and rules about the use of combustible materials in the internal construction of furniture.

This complicated system is difficult to follow but the union's fire safety advisor, David Sibert, is working closely with both the Department for Business Innovation and

Skills and the organisation that has developed the new test to fully understand the proposed new process.

The central theme of the proposals is to alter the testing procedure so component parts used in the manufacture of furniture are tested in a way that better reflects how they are used in real life.

It is claimed that less fire retardant chemicals will need to be added to fabric in order for it to pass the new test and that this is a true demonstration that the product will be fire-safe in its end-use application.

The FBU is still looking closely at this claim and will not support it unless it is proved not to be a step backwards.

In the meantime, it has come to light that many items

of furniture manufactured and sold in the UK do not even meet the current regulations.

Spot checks by trading standards officers have found furniture retailers in which 80% of the fabric used on their showroom floor is easily ignitable.

### Lack of compliance

It is difficult to establish the true depth of this problem because, as elsewhere in the public sector, trading standards departments are being cut back and are unable to carry out the appropriate tests.

The union is still considering the proposed changes to the testing regime for the furniture regulations.

However, at present, the far greater threat is from

a lack of compliance with any regulations.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: "Furniture fire safety regulations have saved hundreds of lives each year since their introduction in 1988, and the FBU must be sure that any change does not jeopardise the safety of the public or those working in the sale or production of furniture."

"However, a lack of compliance with existing regulations already represents a massive threat to safety, representing a real risk to the public."

"In order to improve safety and enforce the regulations properly, government cuts to trading standards departments must stop so that proper tests and monitoring can be conducted."





# Legal Beagle

## Solution for a problem no-one has

**FBU**  
**FREEPHONE**  
**LEGAL ADVICE**  
**0808 100 6061**  
**IN SCOTLAND**  
**0800 089 1331**

**Q I heard the government is introducing a Heroism Bill. What is it?**

**A** The government announced the Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Bill, known as the Heroism Bill, in the Queen's Speech in May.

It is its latest attempt to grab headlines for "reducing red tape" while actually eroding health and safety rules that protect workers.

The government has swallowed the tabloid headlines that claim people are put off volunteering, helping others or intervening in an emergency because they fear being held liable and sued if anything goes wrong. The fact that millions of people volunteer in some capacity every week in the UK is ignored.

Ministers say the legislation would ensure that when people, including employers, have taken a "responsible approach" towards the safety of others, the courts will take this into account in any claims for negligence from the event.

As usual, the government is ignoring the disastrous impact that its assault on rules protecting workers will have on civil society and, at the same time, siding with the insurance industry – big Conservative Party donors.

If the government really wanted to deal with fears about people being put off "doing the right thing", it would stop the insurance industry making payments in apparently hopeless cases brought by inexperienced lawyers or dodgy claims companies.



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

The problem for the companies is that if they fought such claims and, as a consequence, they dried up, the myth of the "compensation culture" used to justify increased premiums and profits would be undermined.

**Q What will change if the proposed legislation becomes law?**

Currently, in a claim for negligence, a court will consider whether the defendant acted reasonably – took reasonable care – in all the circumstances.

What this means varies from case to case: the standard expected of a teacher in a classroom will differ hugely from that for a firefighter in charge at an incident.

When determining whether reasonable care was taken, the

courts already consider a range of factors, including the size of the risk, the likelihood of the risk happening, the size of the consequence and the cost of avoiding the risk.

The Heroism Bill would do nothing to change this legal framework. Judges already consider whether somebody was doing a "good deed".

But, by directing judges to give weight to factors such as whether a defendant's actions were intended to benefit civil society, the government is forcing judges to look at such factors in a different light, rather than take a common-sense approach.

We expect the government to rush this legislation through before the general election in May 2015 and then claim to have tackled "compensation culture" and "cut red tape".

**Q How might the legislation affect me?**

The problem the Heroism Bill is designed to solve – that people are frightened of volunteering and helping others or from intervening in an emergency – does not exist.

There is not a shred of evidence that there is a problem. Not one person has ever been prosecuted for trying to save somebody in an emergency situation.

Emergency services, including the fire service, have, for a long time, worked closely with employers and the Health and Safety Executive to ensure that health and safety protection is compatible with emergency situations.

This legislation would throw up the frightening possibility of blame being shifted when things go wrong and firefighters are injured. Under the Bill's provisions, employers could claim that a firefighter was acting "irresponsibly".

And what of a "hothead" firefighter – who against orders – runs into a burning building to make a "heroic" rescue, causing another crew member to be injured in rescuing them?

If the Heroism Bill were to be law, the court would have to take into account the hothead's "heroism" in considering who was to blame and who should pay compensation.

Members who are concerned about their liability during the course of their employment are strongly advised to contact their FBU representative in the first instance.

**Simon Dewsbury**  
**Thompsons Solicitors**



# Not bad for a bloke who started out shooting comedy footage with a £50 camera from Aldi

**Firefighter and filmmaker Ciaran Gibbons wins awards for his projects that range from boxing to the plight of Palestinian colleagues**

## Film making

South Wales firefighter Ciaran Gibbons picked up the best feature documentary award at the Carmarthen Bay film festival earlier this summer for his debut film *The Fight Game*.

It was screened at a mini film festival in Cardiff in June and other screenings are in the pipeline. He's also just learned that Palestinian support groups in the UK are interested in showing his short film *Firefighters Under Occupation*.

For a bloke who started out shooting comedy footage just five years ago with a £50 video camera from Aldi, it's quite some achievement. Ciaran has moved on from using editing software to parachute himself into *The X Factor* for comic effect and sharing it with blue watch at Maesteg fire station.

## Having a laugh

"I was just having a laugh – singing *Fairy Tale of New York* very badly in a cowboy hat and getting praise and encouragement to turn professional from Simon Cowell and the judges," says Ciaran, who has worked at Wrexham, Roath and now Maesteg since leaving the army 15 years ago.

"One thing led to another," says Ciaran, who has been interested in filmmaking since boyhood. That 50 quid camera may have kick-started his career but he has since upgraded to a bargain

semi-professional Sony Z1e which he tracked down on eBay.

It wasn't long before the boxing fan, former light middleweight amateur boxer and sometime trainer started combining his two passions – uploading boxing matches and interviews to boxing websites and forums. Word had got round that he was handy with a video camera. The seeds of his award-winning boxing documentary were sown.

## Ringside footage

*The Fight Game* charts the move of local boxing talent and fellow light middleweight Aled Cook from amateur to professional boxing and includes interviews with boxing luminaries Chris Eubank and Joe Calzaghe, along with ringside footage to flesh out Aled's story.

Ciaran and Aled come from the same village – Blaengwynfi, not far from Bridgend – and Ciaran has watched Aled progress since he first took up the sport as a nine-year-old. Ciaran even did a stint as a trainer at Gwynfi Amateur Boxing Club where he saw the talented young amateur boxer "win a few Welsh and a few British titles".

They may have boxed at the same weight, but "Aled is a very fit light middleweight, whereas I was a podgy light middleweight," says Ciaran, whose footage so impressed judges at the film festival.

Ciaran cites a free film course in

*Main picture:  
Ciaran films  
professional boxer  
Nathan Cleverly, a  
former WBO light  
heavyweight world  
champion  
Top: Receiving the  
best feature docu-  
mentary award at  
the Carmarthen  
Bay Film Festival  
from judge Sion  
Hughes*

*Bottom right: With  
Joe Calzaghe CBE,  
the longest reigning  
super middleweight  
world champion  
Bottom left: After  
filming Chris  
Eubank, a world  
champion for over  
five years and  
undefeated at  
middleweight*



*Palestinian  
firefighters on the  
visit to Scotland  
that led to Ciaran's  
film Firefighters  
Under Occupation*

Maesteg a few years back as helping him fulfil his long-held ambition to make films. It was just two hours a week, for 10 weeks but encouragement from tutor Ed Sinclair, an experienced documentary maker, gave Ciaran the confidence to make more serious work, as well as honing his camera and editing skills. Austerity has all but killed off such courses.

"You wouldn't get free film courses these days," says Ciaran who spent 15 months filming and editing his documentary that was finally finished in April.

## FBU networks

His next project had a more political edge – and was only possible through FBU networks.

"I really wanted to make something about the Palestinian/Israeli situation and





contacted a few people in the FBU.

"I was put in touch with Jim Malone, a former Scottish FBU organiser who is now retired. He mentioned some Palestinian firefighters were coming to Scotland for water rescue training. There are lots of flash floods on the West Bank partly because Israeli settlers are diverting water.

"Jim invited me up to meet the Palestinians. I paid for myself to get to Scotland by Megabus, which was a fun eight-hour trip, and I took it from there."

The resulting 13-minute film packs a punch. Or, as Ciaran puts it, "it gets the message across about what it is like to live on the West Bank under occupation

but also how it is to be a firefighter when you are stopped at roadblocks by Israeli defence forces when you should be on your way to fight fires." It includes testimony from the visiting firefighters – who tell of how response times can be subject to military whim.

#### Stopped regularly

"Firefighters regularly get stopped and held up at checkpoints by the Israeli army. Sometimes they can be held up for hours," Ciaran explains.

He was able to interview the five Palestinian firefighters hosted by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, who

presented him with a Palestinian flag. Former FBU general secretary Ken Cameron also turned out to meet the five.

"It was humbling to meet and speak to firefighters who have to do their job under a military occupation and with limited resources," says Ciaran.

He will doubtless carry on filming. That best documentary award could open a few doors in the world of filmmaking. He hopes to make a longer film about Palestine in the future.

He also loves his job as a firefighter. It's early days and the film world can be fickle. We'll see if a film about a gifted amateur turning professional acts as a calling card in the gruelling and sometimes glitzy world of film.

■ See a trailer for *The Fight Game*:  
<http://youtu.be/4Px-EbDmfXc>



# Prize quiz



## Win a John Lewis Spectrum Duo DAB/FM bluetooth digital radio

### HOW TO ENTER

To win a John Lewis Spectrum Duo DAB/FM bluetooth digital radio, please send your answers by 30 September 2014 on a postcard to: Prize Competition (August/September 2014), FBU Head Office, Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE. Please include your name, address and membership number. The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries.

GETTY IMAGES



**1** What is the name of the lion cub in the 1966 film *Born Free*?

- A - Elsa
- B - Joy
- C - George
- D - Adamson

**2** What instrument did jazz legend Miles Davis play?

- A - Trombone
- B - Saxophone
- C - Trumpet
- D - Flute

**3** Which film depicts the defence of Rorke's Drift in 1879?

- A - Cry Freedom
- B - Out of Africa
- C - Zulu
- D - Amandla!

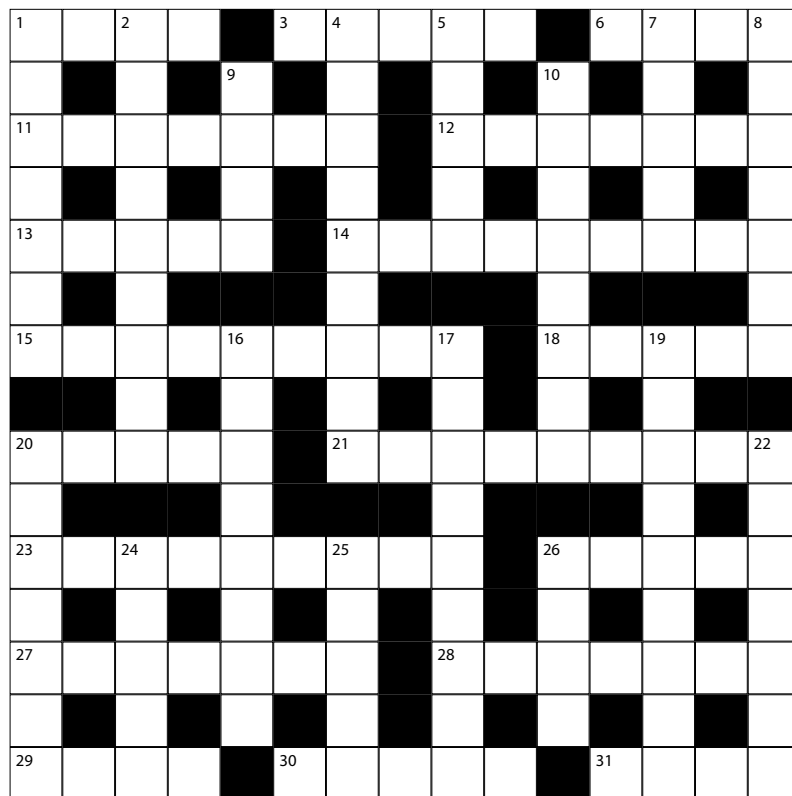
**4** From which opera does March of the Toreadors come?

- A - Turandot
- B - Aida
- C - La bohème
- D - Carmen

**5** Whose 2010 debut album is called *Lights*?

- A - Ellie Goulding
- B - Adele
- C - Susan Boyle
- D - Emeli Sandé

GETTY IMAGES



## CROSSWORD

### ACROSS

- 1** Yearn (for a steady, dull pain?) (4)
- 3** Egg-producing organ (5)
- 6** Loud, sudden noise (4)
- 11** French firefighter (7)
- 12** Spanish firefighter (7)
- 13** Grown-up (5)
- 14** Southernmost continent (9)
- 15** Sweet-meal biscuit (9)
- 18** Sentimentally dripping? (5)
- 20** Put tennis ball into play (5)
- 21** Deport for trial (9)
- 23** Dutch fire service (9)
- 26** Fire (5)
- 27** Shoulder piece denoting rank (7)
- 28** Greed (7)
- 29** Marc Bolan's dinosaur (1,3)
- 30** It's hot and sweaty here (5)
- 31** Message sent by thumb? (4)

### DOWN

- 1** Show approval when 17ed (7)
- 2** Pork-meat patty served in a bun (9)
- 4** Put into words (9)
- 5** Machine designed to perform tasks (5)
- 7** Avoid, head off (5)
- 8** Tetchy (7)
- 9** 568ml, or 20 fl oz (4)
- 10** Food of the gods (8)
- 16** Quickly (8)
- 17** Keep amused; play host (9)
- 19** What Tories do to public services (9)
- 20** One studied, or ruled over (7)
- 22** Most fundamental constituent of matter (7)
- 24** Astonish (5)
- 25** In addition to (5)
- 26** May evacuate in the copse (4)

### Last issue's answers and winners



### Crossword solution July

### July quiz answers

- 1** - A Gary Lineker
- 2** - A 1986
- 3** - D Carlos Alberto
- 4** - C Sven Goran Eriksson
- 5** - D Pickles

### Winner of May/June quiz

Paul McDonald, Hertfordshire




# Station Cat

## Time for an Audi audit?

*Just the place for a fire service conference – Wyboston Lakes resort in Bedfordshire*



### Top gear for top people

 The senior management team in Buckinghamshire has given a fresh meaning to the phrase “a fast buck”. They have all acquired free Audis.

Naturally these cash-strapped chaps will not be required to pay for fuel or lease costs, like the rest of the officers. Why should they? The cars are designated as “resilience vehicles” and, as such, can be used by other members of staff.

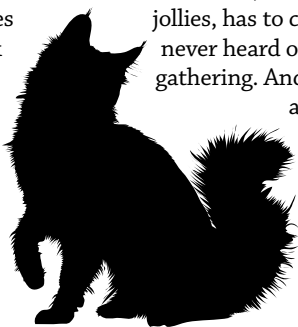
None of them has been driven by anyone else since they were picked up from the show room 12 months ago. But surely that’s coincidence?

Two of the Audis boast an additional feature to the normal high specifications of the brand: the financial and legal directors’ vehicles are equipped with blue lights and are thus classified as “emergency vehicles”.


All well and good, except that both of these senior managers are non-op grades and your Cat doubts that they are driver trained. Fortunately neither of them has been required to come to work on blues.

Your Cat enjoys seeing the Audis speed past her into the station in the morning. Except that, so far, she hasn’t spotted the one allocated to the legal director. He lives close enough to walk in. So his partner motors around in it, blue light not required.

Audi hell do they get away with it?



### It’s their way and the fairway

 Spare a thought for the East Sussex Fire Authority. It has had some very difficult decisions to make recently. Only last month it decided that in order to save money, it was necessary to chop both fire engines and jobs.

It wore itself out deciding to axe 24 full-time posts and take a fire engine from either Preston Park or Hove. After a tiring session, members concluded that, in austere times, everyone but themselves needs to make sacrifices.

After all these efforts to worsen emergency services on behalf of the community, it was decided to offer the 18 councillors who sit on the authority a little break: a few days away at a golf and spa resort.

The chosen recuperation venue was the Wyboston Lakes resort in Bedfordshire with costs amounting to well over £2,000 before the inclusion of travel expenses for the 260-mile round-trip.

Chief fire officer Des Prichard said that, as well as trips to the spa and rounds of golf, the 18 invited councillors (one for each hole) would be free to attend a “combined fire authorities conference”.


The Cat, no stranger to jollies, has to confess she’s never heard of this particular gathering. And she is not alone. Simon Herbert, the chair of the local FBU branch,

admits that he is similarly in the dark.

Labour councillors have decided to boycott the October conference/junket/outing. Nancy Platts, the party’s parliamentary candidate in Kemptown called the plans ‘outrageous’.

The Cat’s hat’s off to Platts.

### Doing the Lambeth talk

 Once again Boris Johnson has scooped the Cat’s Prize for Sinister Nonsense Gobbledegook.

When Labour London Assembly member Val Shawcross asked for a guarantee that Lambeth fire station will remain on its



present site, the London mayor said: “In terms of the fire station, I am open to considering all viable proposals for the use of 8 Albert Embankment, bearing in mind the requirement to demonstrate best consideration in any arrangement made.”

What language is this? What could it mean? Our best guess is: “It will remain a fire station unless a luxury property developer comes along with


an interesting alternative arrangement!”

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority used to employ a company called Native Land, which proposed retaining the station and building flats on the upper floors. Last year they were sacked and Boris handed the LFEPA a short-list of his “favoured developers” to “explore” the sale of the hugely valuable riverside site.

Val Shawcross says the closure of ten stations in London had been “justified” by the argument that the Albert Embankment site would serve the area. The authority has admitted it is unlikely to find any suitable (that is, cheap) alternative land nearby.

Maybe Johnson is wise to obscure the issue. After all, if you were in favour of shutting the local fire station for St Thomas’ Hospital, MI6 and Westminster and which, incidentally, provides the capital’s only fire boat (left) service, you wouldn’t want people to know, would you?

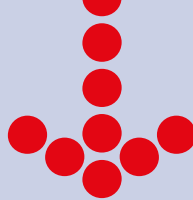
### Every picture tells a story

 Do you think you’ve been called out on some bizarre rescue missions? Last month German colleagues freed a US exchange student at Tübingen University from a giant stone vagina into which he had squeezed himself for a jolly jape.

Passers-by took a series of pictures that they posted on image-sharing website Imgur before troubling themselves to call the emergency services.



# 25-year badges



**Andy Cicco** (r), white watch, Barnet, London, receives his 25-year badge from borough rep Greg Edwards



**Richie Matheson** (r), South Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Vaughan Jenkins



**Gary Yates** (l), Swallow, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Dave Turner



**Russel Phillips** (r), South Wales OOT, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Vaughan Jenkins



**Henry Landis** (l), fire safety, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Steve Collins



**Toby Markey** (r), red watch, City Centre, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Les Skarratts



**Lynn Betteridge** (r), Cambridgeshire officers, receives his 25-year badge from ONC EC member John Arnold



**Jon Southgate** (l), fire safety, Suffolk HQ, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Adrian Mayhew



**Colin Jones** (left), green watch, Peterlee, Durham, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Tony Curry, with green watch colleagues looking on



**Paul Newnes** (r), Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from officers' rep Mike O'Mahoney



**John Hunt** (r), Crownhill, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Neil Argyle



**John Collingwood** (r), white watch, Marine, Cleveland, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Peter Rodgers



**Scot Cockburn** (r), Group 2, Renfrew, Strathclyde, receives his 25-year badge from his watch commander Joe Cairney



**Peter Chisholm** (l), Crook, Durham, receives his 25-year badge from north east RDS rep Andy Stubbings



**Bob Bradbury** (l), Plympton, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andy Gould



**Kev Brewerton** (r), green watch, Coventry, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Neil Flynn with watch colleagues looking on



**Kevin Kerry** (r), red watch, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade rep Steve Allen



**Kelvin Rex** (r), Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from SM Terry Clapp at West Moors training centre with other instructors (from left) Pete Neilson, Steve Amos, Steve Crooks and John Lewis





**Chris Hadley** (l), Torquay, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Dave Crawford



**Dave Walton** (r), West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from Rodclif Barrett



**Philippe Brevet** (l), Avon, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser John Maggs



**Tony O'Kane** (r), blue watch, Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Andy Clark with colleagues looking on



**Graeme Steed** (r), red watch, City Centre, Merseyside, receives his 25-year medal from regional secretary Les Skarratts



**Neil Ditch** (l), blue watch, Poole, receives his 25-year badge from membership organiser Scott Blandford with watch colleagues looking on



**Gary Johnson** (r), legislative fire safety, South Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Vaughan Jenkins



Essex members (l-r) **Mark Wilby**, **Dave Barritt** (officers' section chair), **Duncan Lewis** and **Lee Palfreyman** receive their 25-year badges from region 9 and Essex officer section rep Eddie Brennan (c)



**Chris Lloyd-Jones** (r), Kingsway, Derbyshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Steve Bainbridge



**John McKevitt** (c) and **Paul Craig** (r), white watch, Crosby, Merseyside, receive their 25-year badges from branch secretary Chris Irvine



**Andrew Dickinson** (r), white watch, Fairweather Green, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade H&S coordinator John Rankin with watch colleagues looking on



**David Wilby** (r), blue watch, The Ridge, Hastings, East Sussex, receives his 25-year badge with colleagues (l-r) Andy Nock, Richie Elson, Rick Plummer



**Mark Watson** (r), driver training, North Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade health and safety rep Alistair Biggs



**Chris Craft** (r) blue watch, Central, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Graham Wilkinson with watch colleagues Lee Harper (far left) and Pat Renshaw looking on



**Russell Giles** (l), red watch, Epsom, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Adam Love with watch colleagues (l-r) Ian Rowley, Steve Todd, Mark Stewart, Steve Northeast, Chris Nassim, Alex Cribben, Mark Dodman, Phil Ives, Adam Stollery and Chris Wasson



**Jason Nightingale** (r), training and development centre, Wiltshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Tony Littler with (back row l-r) Paul Lawler, Wayne Presley, Matty Maggs and Sam Legg-Bagg





Romford, London, red watch members (l-r) **Mick Parlour**, **Paul Kendall** and **Nick Gunn** receive their 25 year badges from borough secretary Mark Triphook (second right)



Fulham, London, white watch members (l-r) **Graham Cowper**, **Mark Malcharek** and **Colin Evans** receive their 25-year badges from borough secretary Martin Conway



**Steve Hall** (l), Walton, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Iain Pompei with colleagues (l-r) Will Keenan, Andy Begg, Steve Hall, Iain Pompei, Eric Daniels and Chris Wiggins (fire safety)



**Dave Moore** (l), West Bridgford, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from Steve Ainley



**Ray Blond** (l), red watch, Southport, Merseyside receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Lisa Smedhurst



**Mark McCourt** (l), white watch, Kensington, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Timmy Hunes



**Gary Sawyers** (r), green watch, Aintree, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from North West regional secretary Les Skarratts



**Geoff Little** (r), green watch, Birkenhead, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from North West regional secretary Les Skarratts



**Rich Chappell** (c), red watch, Redhill Park, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from membership organiser Scott Blandford with watch colleagues looking on



**Liam Wheeler** (r), Rickmansworth, receives his 25-year badge from Hertfordshire brigade secretary Tony Smith (since retired)



**Richard Ford** (r), Rickmansworth, receives his 25-year badge from Hertfordshire brigade secretary Tony Smith (since retired)



**Pete Jenkins** (r), legislative fire safety, South Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Vaughan Jenkins



**John Andre** (r), green watch, Upton, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from north west regional secretary Les Skarratts



**Colin Bird** (l), response and resilience, Thornton, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from Fife brigade chair Phil Randall



**Mike Carter** (r), Swindon, Wiltshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Tony Littler



**Nina Evans** (r), control, Mid and West Wales, receives her 25-year badge from brigade secretary Barrie Davies



**Steve Bell** (r), green watch, Swindon, Wiltshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Tony Littler



**Mark Brown** (l), York and Humberside B&EMM rep (at the time), receives his 25-year badge from EC member Ian Murray



**Tony Blyton** (l) Retford, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Andy Rowding





**Kev Abrahams** (l), blue watch, Cannock, Staffordshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Rich Williams



**Darren Whitlock** (r), red watch, Batley, receives his 25-year badge from West Yorkshire brigade secretary Dave Williams with colleagues looking on



**Glenn Hepburn** (l), green watch, Erdington, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from sadly recently deceased brigade secretary Paul Cockburn with colleagues looking on



**Andy Ingham** (l), red watch, Cookridge, and Paul Dalby (r), blue watch, Cookridge, receive their 25-year badges from Leeds divisional rep Paul Drinkwater



**Ricardo Brown** (l), blue watch and branch rep, Solihull, receives his 25-year badge from sadly recently deceased West Midlands brigade secretary Paul Cockburn



**Ian Clair** (r), white watch, Birkenhead, Merseyside, receives his 25-year medal from North West regional secretary Les Skarratts



**Mick Blum** (l) and **Phil Mullaney** (c), red watch, Bradford, West Yorkshire, receive their 25-year badges from branch rep Andy Pickering



**Dan Thomas** (r), red watch, City Centre, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Les Skarratts



**Gordon McQuade** (r), Central, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



**Robert Sanders** (c), Clydesmill, Strathclyde, receives his 25-year badge from branch officials Mark Tracy and George McMillan



**Mike Price** (r), Mid and West Wales control, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Barrie Davies



**Billy John** (l), Kenfig Hill, Bridgend, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Neil Byrne



**Phil Chappel** (r), Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from Steve Ainley



**Steve Renny** (l), white watch and branch rep, Finchley, London, receives his 25-year badge from London NW chair Greg Edwards



**Steve Waller** (r), Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Scott Blandford



**Dave Colclough** (l), Christchurch, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership organiser Scott Blandford



**Roy Stewart** (r), green watch, Birkenhead, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from north west regional secretary Les Skarratts



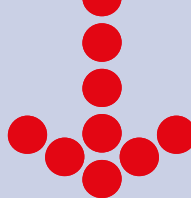
**Pat Carroll** (l), fire safety HQ, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from sadly recently deceased West Midlands brigade secretary Paul Cockburn



**Ian Dick** (l), North East health and safety rep, receives his 25-year badge from Northumberland brigade H&S rep Colin James



# 25-year badges



**Pat Clark** (r), Cambridgeshire control, receives her 25-year badge from brigade secretary Cameron Matthews



**Pete Scarlett** (l), Grantham, Lincolnshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Chris Hides at a picket line in September last year



**Taff Lewis** (l), Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack on a break from a 35-pump fire in Smethwick



**Ned Bailey** (l), red watch, Falmouth, Cornwall, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Stuart Pulley



**Peter Jury** (r), blue watch, Ely, South Wales, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Nigel Mace with colleagues looking on



**Tim Spring** (r), Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Karen Adams



**Tina McDonald** (r), control, Mid and West Wales, receives her 25-year badge from brigade secretary Barrie Davies



**Tom McMillan** (r), officers' branch, Lancashire, receives his belated 25-year badge from brigade secretary Steve Harman



**Vanessa Martin** (r), control, Mid and West Wales, receives her 25-year badge from brigade secretary Barrie Davies



**Bryan Matthews** (l), red watch, Hay Mills, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from sadly recently deceased West Midlands brigade secretary Paul Cockburn



**Gary Bishop** (r), green watch, Chelmsford, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from regional official Alan Chinn-Shaw



**Steve Mills** (l), retired, receives his 25-year badge from sadly recently deceased West Midlands brigade secretary Paul Cockburn



**Dave Cook** (r), red watch, Orpington, London, receives his 25-year badge from Bromley borough secretary Ed Thompson with Orpington watch colleagues (l-r) John Ratajczyk, Paul Michaels, Dave Fowler, Paul Wyer, Barry Byrne and Trevor Lee looking on

Please send digital files or prints to: [firefighter@fbu.org.uk](mailto:firefighter@fbu.org.uk) or Firefighter, FBU, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE. Please include full details for every picture – full names of everyone who is in it; their station/brigade/watch etc; where they are in the picture (eg: left to right); their union posts/branch if relevant; and where and when it was taken.

## FBU regional offices

### REGION 1 Scotland

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### REGION 8 Mid and West Wales, North Wales, South Wales

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### REGION 13 Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, Avon, Gloucs, Wilts, Dorset

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### Change of address or next of kin

Advise your Brigade Organiser of any change of address and Head Office of changes to next of kin or nominations for benefits.

## FBU FREEPHONE LEGAL ADVICE LINE

**0808 100 6061**

(England, Wales and N Ireland),

**0800 089 1331**

(Scotland),

The line provides advice for personal injury, family law, wills, conveyancing, personal finance and consumer issues. For disciplinary and employment-related queries contact your local FBU representative.

**T THOMPSONS**  
SOLICITORS